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# Stanford Law Professor Discusses Commodification in Opening Address of Lawrence University Biomedical Ethics Lecture Series

*Posted on: November 4th, 2004 by Rick Peterson*

Stanford University Law Professor Margaret Jane Radin examines the contradictory nature of commodification — the transformation of relationships formerly untainted by commerce into commercial relationships of buying and selling — in the opening address of Lawrence University's four-part 2004-05 Edward F. Mielke Lecture Series in Biomedical Ethics.

Radin, the William Benjamin Scott and Luna M. Scott Professor of Law at Stanford, presents "Commodification: Promise or Threat," Monday, Nov. 15 at 7 p.m. in Lawrence's Wriston Art Center auditorium. The lecture is free and open to the public.

A specialist in the fields of intellectual property, contracts and e-commerce, Radin will examine the evolving ethical issues associated with commodification, ranging from the solicitation of young women's eggs in exchange for large sums of money to the international trade of human kidneys to the commercialization of technological methods of creating babies, such as in vitro fertilization.

Radin also will address the ways commodification both raises objections — if everything that human beings value becomes reduced to a dollar value, do we remain human? — and produces opportunities — the promise of technological baby-making can enhance autonomy and "personhood" and make people free to have children.

A 1963 graduate of Stanford and a member of the faculty there

since 1986, Radin is currently teaching as a visiting professor at the University of Michigan School of Law. She served as director of Stanford Law School's Program in Law, Science and Technology from 2001-2004 and co-authored the first standard law-school textbook dealing with Internet commerce.

A nationally recognized scholar on aspects of property as a right and as an institution, Radin is the author of two books on the subject, "Contested Commodities" and "Reinterpreting Property." Her current research interests focus on contract and commodification in the online environment.

Other speakers and topics scheduled for the Mielke Lecture Series in Biomedical Ethics include: • Jan. 12 — Angela Fagerlin, research investigator, internal medicine and the Program for Improving Health Care Decisions, University of Michigan, "Pulling the Plug on Living Wills: How Living Wills Have Failed to Live up to their Mandate."

- Feb. 23 — David Dranove, Walter McNerney Distinguished Professor of Health Industry Management, Northwestern University, "Putting a Price on Life."

- May 11 — Allen Buchanan, Professor of Public Policy Studies and Philosophy, Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Duke University, "What Was Really Wrong with Eugenics?"